

**AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111**  
**U.S. APP. NO. 10/074,044**

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Also, the Examiner has objected to the disclosure, alleging that page 4, lines 12-16 contains vague and ambiguous material. Applicant amends the disclosure and claim 1 and submits that claim 1 satisfies the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Kasai (US Publication No. 2001/0021251 in view of Nagashima (EP 0851629). The rejection of these claims is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of the present application includes an encrypting step, a storing step, and a determining step. In the encrypting step, synchronizing information, which changes whenever at least a portion of the important information is updated, is stored in the database, together with the important information and the synchronizing information is encrypted. In the storing step, the encrypted synchronizing information is distributively stored in pre-determined places. In the determining step, the synchronizing information stored in predetermined places is combined and decrypted, and it is determined whether the combined and decrypted synchronizing information is identical to the synchronizing information stored in the database.

The image processing apparatus of Kasai comprises an inputting unit, a judging unit, and a controlling unit. The inputting unit inputs the image data, key information used for recognizing alteration of the image data, and the property information. The judging unit judges from the image

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data and the key information whether the image data was altered. The controlling unit controls an execution of the image processing method in accordance with a judgment by the judging unit and the property information.

In the key management method of Nagashima, pieces of secret information (key) are distributively stored. The pieces of secret information (key) are collected and used.

Kasai teaches that the key information and property information are added to the image data. However, Kasai and Nagashima do not teach or imply that the synchronizing information, which changes whenever at least one piece of the important information is updated, is stored in the database together with the important information and the synchronizing information is encrypted.

At least for this reason, Applicant submits that claims 1-14 are patentable over Kasai in view of Nagashima.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

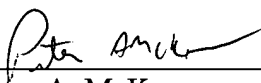
Respectfully submitted,

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